

## CLAIMS

WHEREFORE, IT IS CLAIMED:

1. A method of improving the aesthetic appearance of epithelia  
5 comprising:  
    applying to the epithelia a topical composition comprising:  
        a retinoid in an amount effective to improve the aesthetic  
        appearance of the epithelia; and  
        a penetration enhancing agent in an amount effective to  
10 enhance penetration of said retinoid into the epithelia,  
        wherein said topical composition is applied to the epithelia for  
        period of time effective to provide the improvement.
- 15 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the epithelia is selected from the  
    group consisting of lip epithelia and vaginal epithelia.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the epithelia is lip epithelia.
- 20 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the improvement in aesthetic  
    appearance is a reduction in the appearance of aging of the lips.
5. The method of claim 4, wherein the aging of the lips is photoaging  
    or intrinsic aging.
- 25 6. The method of claim 4, wherein the improvement in aesthetic  
    appearance is selected from the group consisting of:
  - a. improvement in lip color;
  - b. improvement in lip dryness;
  - 30 c. improvement in lip clarity;
  - d. reduction in the number vertical lip lines;
  - e. reduction in the depth of vertical lip lines;

- f. improvement in lip dryness appearance; and
- g. combinations thereof.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein said retinoid is in amount from  
5 about 0.001 wt% to about 1.5 wt% of the total weight of the composition.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein said retinoid is retinol.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the penetration enhancing agent is  
10 selected from the group consisting of: an organic solvent, an alkyl  
sulfoxide, a phosphine oxide, a sugar ester, a anionic surfactant, a non-ionic  
surfactant; an Azone, a N-substituted di-isopropanolamine, a fatty acid  
alcohol, and mixtures thereof.

15 10. The method of claim 1, wherein the penetration enhancing agent is  
selected from the group consisting of ethanol, propylene glycol, butylene  
glycol, pentylene glycol, 2-pyrrolidone, 1-methyl-2-pyrrolidone, 5-methyl-2-  
pyrrolidone, 1,5-dimethyl-2-pyrrolidone, 1-ethyl-2-pyrrolidone, 2-pyrrolidone  
carboxylic acid, dimethyl sulfoxide, dimethylacetamide, dimethylformadide;  
20 alkyl sulfoxide; phosphine oxide; sucrose acetate, sucrose octanoate, 1-  
dodecylazaclo-heptan-2-one , oleic acid, linoleic acid, and mixtures thereof.

11 The method of claim 1, wherein the composition further comprises a  
cosmetically acceptable vehicle.

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12. The method of claim 11, wherein the vehicle is selected from the  
group consisting of: an emulsion, a gel, and a stick, a suspension, a foam,  
a stick, a solution, a spray, a patch, a powder and a towelette.

30 13. The method of claim 1, wherein the composition has a pH less than  
about 7.5.

14. The method of claim 11, wherein the vehicle is anhydrous.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein said topical composition further comprises a secondary component selected from the group consisting of:

- a. a rexinoid;
- b. an estrogen synthetase (aromatase) stimulating compound;
- 5 c. a 5 alpha-reductase activity inhibitor;
- d. an exfoliation promoting compound;
- e. an ultraviolet (UV) light protecting/sunscreen agent;
- f. a barrier function enhancing agent;
- g. a barrier function enhancing agent;
- 10 h. an elastase inhibitor;
- i. a skin lightening agent;
- j. an antioxidant;
- k. a skin warming agent;
- l. a skin cooling compound; and
- 15 m. an anti-pruritic/anti-itch compound.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the secondary component is said sunscreen.

20 17. The method of claim 16, wherein said sunscreen is selected from the group consisting of:

- a. avobenzzone;
- b. octylmethoxycinnamate;
- c. oxybenzone;
- 25 d. titanium dioxide;
- e. octyl salicylate; and
- f. mixtures thereof.

18. A composition for improving the aesthetic appearance of epithelia comprising:

a retinoid in an amount effective to improve the aesthetic appearance of the epithelia; and

5 a penetration enhancing agent in an amount effective to enhance penetration of said retinoid into the epithelia.

19. The composition of claim 18, further comprising a sunscreen agent selected from the group consisting of :

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- a. avobenzene;
  - b. octylmethoxycinnamate;
  - c. titanium dioxide;
  - d. octyl salicylate; and
  - e. mixtures thereof.

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